

# The effect of economic recession on Nigeria educational system: the way out

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## ABSTRACT

This research examines the effect of the economic turn-down on the educational system of Nigeria and the way forward. The work concentrated fully on seeking the perception of teachers on the impact economic recession has made on the educational system. The design for the study was a descriptive survey and five (5) research questions with a hypothesis guided it. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire which was validated by specialists in science education. The data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test statistical method. The findings revealed that teachers agreed to the fact that economic crisis in the country has caused a lot of harms to the educational system which could be seen from inadequate curriculum implementation, lack of resources in terms of competent manpower, facilities, and fund non-availability and could be salvaged by: making vocational subjects teaching cash-productive; boosting the students interest in 'doing' than writing; and developing entrepreneurial spirit and skills in students. Finally, conclusion and recommendations were made based on the findings.

**Keywords:** economic, recession, educational system, entrepreneurial.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Economic recession may be viewed by different people in a different ways. Nevertheless, the bottom-line is that economic recession are those unfavourable economic situations which have negative effects on the economic betterment of an individual, the society (including the social system) and the nation at large (Folaranmi, Lateef Gbemiga, 2017). Unpleasant economic condition is not a sudden occurrence but a gradual process which when not attended to becomes complicated and degenerate into economic recession. At this point, signs like unemployment, inflation, loss of income, insufficient food provision, inadequate clothing, dilapidated shelter, non-functional healthcare system; inadequate funding of the education sector, poor sanitation and bad drainage, absence of public convenience, highway potholes and erosion gullies becomes more obvious in the society. Henstra (2008), Ibrahim and Mandara (2009) who noted that the distractive effects of the economic crisis are not easy to quantify, but the reality is that the world stock market has fallen, large financial and educational institutions

has collapsed, drastic fall in the standard of living, acute accumulation of debt by nation; massive retrenchment of workers and increase in crime rates.

Moreover, it has been observed that the effect of economic meltdown is far worse on the educational system of the nation. Most school owners have adopted an attitude of wait and see before risking their capital into future and it is this same attitude of “wait-and-see” that aggravates the already existing inability of the economy to produce qualitative or standard education. According to reports gathered from the press media, it was observed that the nation is now in the era where teachers and educational workers are now being owed 4-6 months’ salary in some of the states. And this has seriously reduced the commitment and zealotness of the workers towards their duties. In fact, it got to a point whereby public schools workers have to embark on protests which seriously affected the academic progress of the students and also the academic activities calendar. No wonder why, Fajonyomi (2007) added that the success or failure of any educational programme rests mainly on the adequate availability of well-qualified (professional) and dedicated teachers. It was also reported that parents no longer find it easy to provide the basic needs of their wards. With all these signs, it shows that the educational system in Nigeria is currently under trampling by the plague of economic recession in the sense that the set objectives and goals of education have not been achieved holistically in terms of its execution.

Meanwhile, Kumuyi (2010) advised that these realities call for every one's hands to be on the spindle so as to overcome the crisis before us. He maintained more that attention should be directed to science and technological education which are the base of any nation's development and sustainability. According to His Excellency, Goodluck Jonathan as reviewed by Udeme (2010), the most profitable ways of achieving growth and development in Nigerian economy is by embarking on economic reform which should center mostly in the energy sector, education sector and infrastructural development. Samuelson (1968) in describing economic diversification as an act of investing in a variety of assets, he also mentioned its benefit as that which reduces risk especially in the time of recession, inflation, deflation etc. Hence, this study aimed at investigating further the extent to which the economic recession has effect the educational system in Nigeria and the workable ways out.

### 1.1. Statement of the problem

Colleges and universities are extraordinarily stable institutions, in part due to their mission and role in our society and in part due to how they operate and are managed. Nonetheless, the current financial downturn is affecting the educational system in a wide variety of ways ranging from poor educational structuring, inadequate resources, recruitment of incompetent teachers, etc. it is on this basis this study seeks to examine further the effect of economic recession on the Nigeria educational system and how progress can be made.

### 1.2. Purpose of the Study

The main purposes of this study were to determine the effects of economic turn-down on Nigeria educational system and the way forward. Specifically the study was undertaken:

1. To determine the extent to which economic recession has influence the standard of education in Nigeria.
2. To determine the effects of economic recession on the structure of education in Nigeria.
3. To determine if the economic situation has any significant effect on the provision of educational resources.
4. To determine the possible causes of economic recession in Nigeria.
5. To determine the way forward to achieve economic revival and sustained qualitative educational growth.

### 1.3. Research questions

To achieve the aforementioned purpose, the following research questions are formulated to be tested by the study.

1. To what extent has the economic recession influence the standard of education in Nigeria?
2. What impact does economic recession has on the structure of education in Nigeria?
3. Does the economic situation have any significant effect on the provision of educational resources?
4. What are the possible causes of economic recession in Nigeria?
5. What rescue measures can be adopted to mitigate the effects of economic recession on education?

### 1.4. Research hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant difference in the level of impact of economic recession on educational system among public and private schools in Nigeria.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Research design

This study is a descriptive research which studies the effect of economic recession on Nigeria educational system using some secondary schools in Ondo state as a case study.

### 2.2. Study population

The researchers restrained the study to a total of one hundred (100) teachers from four (4) different secondary schools in Ondo west local government area, Ondo state. The schools are; Dele international school, Fagun, Ondo, Success international school, lasalawa, Ondo, St. James grammar school, lipakala, Ondo and St. Joseph grammar school, off ife-garage road, Ondo, Jubilee high school, C.A.C grammar school.

### 2.3. Sample and sampling technique

Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select one hundred (100) teachers from the six secondary schools selected in Ondo west local government area.

### 2.4. Research instrument

Questionnaire was used as basic instrument for data collection to aid easy comprehension by the teachers. The teacher's questionnaire was divided into two sections; section A focused on teachers personal data while section B focused on the Teachers Assessment Questionnaire (TAQ).

### 2.5. Validation of research instrument

The research instrument was content validated by an expert in science education department and necessary corrections were made so that the instrument will measure what it is designed to measure.

### 2.6. Administration of research instrument

The questionnaire was designed and administered by the researchers personally on the teachers after due permission had been taken from the school principals. Also, the teachers were rightly informed on the need for sincerity and honesty in answering the questions.

### 2.7. Data analysis

The necessary data needed for the study were collected and collated; mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the research questions formulated for this study while t-test method was used to analyze the hypothesis raised. Emerging results was tabulated below for brevity and clarity.

## 3. DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

### 3.1. Research question one

To what extent has the economic recession influence the standard of education in Nigeria?

**Table 1** The mean and standard deviation showing the extent to which economic recession has influence the standard of education in Nigeria.

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	REMARK
1	Inability of our salary to purchase basic needs reduces our passion to work efficiently.	3.17	1.07	AGREED
2	Students find it difficult to comprehend things taught due to their poor diet.	3.00	1.04	AGREED
3	Students wear old and tattered uniform to school due to their parent's inability to get new ones.	2.88	1.11	AGREED

4	Students with high performance are motivated with prize or scholarship.	2.96	0.99	AGREED
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Item 1 on table 1 above shows that the mean of the respondents is 3.17 which is more than the expected mean of 2.5. This indicates that those who agreed that inability of their salary to purchase basic needs reduce their passion to work efficiently are more than those who disagreed. This indicates the teacher's salary is no longer enough to take care of their daily needs and hence weakens their efficiency in the face of work. In item 2, the mean of the respondents is 3.00 which is more than the expected mean of 2.5. This implies that those who agreed to the fact that students find it difficult to comprehend things taught due to their poor diet are more than the respondents who disagreed. This implies that the students are not taking proper diets which in return affect their level of comprehensibility. In item 3, the mean of the respondents is 2.88 which is more than the expected mean of 2.5. This simply shows that the respondents who agreed that students wear old and tattered uniform to school due to their parent's inability to get new ones are more than those who disagreed. This shows that parents are unable to fund their children academic has expected. In item 4, the mean of the respondents is 2.96 which are more than the expected mean of 2.5. This indicates that those who agreed that students with high performance are motivated with prize or scholarship are more than the respondents who disagreed. This also implies that most schools still issue their best students awards despite the economic recession.

### 3.2. Research question two

What impact does economic recession has on the structure of education in Nigeria?

**Table 2** the mean and standard deviation showing the level of impact economic recession has on the structure of education in Nigeria.

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	REMARK
5	Classes are merged together due to inability of the management to provide more classrooms.	3.25	1.05	AGREED
6	The condition of the school structures does not guarantee the safety of the students, the staff and others.	2.81	0.97	AGREED
7	To maximized cost, the school engages us with more than two subjects.	2.82	1.02	AGREED
8	The curricula have been reduced and some subjects have been removed in my school.	2.65	1.32	AGREED

From table 2 above, in item 5, the mean of the respondents is 3.25 which is more than the expected mean of 2.5. This implies that those who agreed that classes are merged together due to inability of the management to provide more classrooms are more than those who disagreed. Indicating that most of the schools are unable to create more classrooms that will take care of the class population rather than merging classes together. In item 6, the mean of the respondents is 2.81 which is more than the expected mean of 2.5. This indicates that the respondents who agreed that the condition of their school structures does not guarantee the safety of the students, the staff and others are more than the respondents who disagreed. In item 7, the mean of the respondents is 2.82 which is more than the expected mean of 2.5. This shows that those who agreed that to maximized cost, the school engages them with more than two subjects are more than those who disagreed. This implies that most schools are not ready to employ new teachers to handle vacant teaching positions in their school rather, they result into embedding more tasks on the already available teachers working with them just to maximize the cost of running the school. In item 8, the mean of the respondents is 2.65 which is more than the expected mean of 2.5. This implies that those who agreed that the curricula have been reduced and some subjects have been removed in their school are more than those who disagreed. This implies that the implementation process of the curricula and some subjects in most of the schools is no longer effective.

### 3.3. Research question three

Does the economic situation have any significant effect on the provision of educational resources?

**Table 3** The mean and standard deviation showing the level of effect of economic situation on the provision of educational resources.

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	REMARK
9	There are no adequate resources like textbooks, equipments and teaching aids to foster teaching-learning process.	2.77	1.12	AGREED
10	Non-availability of fund made us to cancel out field trip and other extra-curricula activities.	2.48	1.14	AGREED
11	Administrative books like registers, attendance books, etc are not promptly provided.	2.70	0.98	AGREED
12	In my school, some teaching and non-teaching staff has resigned or has been laid-off due to inability of the management to pay their salary and other attached allowance.	2.81	1.11	AGREED

From table 3, in item 9, the mean of the respondents is 2.77 which are more than the expected mean of 2.5. This implies that the respondents who agreed that there are no adequate resources like textbooks, equipments and teaching aids to foster teaching-learning process are more than those who disagreed. In item 10, it is obvious that the mean of the respondents is 2.48 which is less than the expected mean of 2.5. This indicates that the respondents who agreed that non-availability of fund made them to cancel out field trip and other extra-curricula activities are less than the respondents that disagreed. Which mean that most schools still engage in extra-curricula activities despite the economic recession. In item 11, the mean of the respondents is 2.70 which are more than the expected mean of 2.5. This shows that those who agreed that administrative books like registers, attendance books, etc are not promptly provided are more than those that disagreed. In item 12, the mean of the respondents is 2.81 which are more than the expected mean of 2.5. This simply shows that those who agreed that in their school, some teaching and non-teaching staff has resigned or has been laid-off due to inability of the management to pay their salary and other attached allowance are more than those who disagreed. Which implies that there is no enough funds to settle the staff remuneration.

### 3.4. Research question four

What are the possible causes of economic recession in Nigeria?

**Table 4** The mean and standard deviation showing the possible causes of economic recession in Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	REMARK
13	Inability to diversify the nation economy into other resourceful and profitable sectors can lead to economy setback.	2.75	1.23	AGREED
14	Lack of national savings can result into economy recession.	2.54	1.31	AGREED
15	Economy meltdown is caused by overdependence on imported materials.	2.63	1.22	AGREED
16	Mono-economy operating system is the major cause of economy backwardness.	2.62	0.87	AGREED

From table 4, in item 13, the mean of the respondents is 2.75 which are more than the expected mean of 2.5. This indicates that the respondents who agreed that inability to diversify the nation economy into other resourceful and profitable sectors can lead to economy setback are more than those that disagreed. In item 14, the mean of the respondents is 2.54 which are more than the expected mean of 2.5. This implies that the respondents who agreed that lack of national savings can result into economy recession are more than those who disagreed. In item 15, the mean of the students is 2.63 which are above the expected mean of 2.5. This implies that those who responded that economy meltdown is caused by over-dependence on imported materials are more than the students who responded that economy meltdown is not caused by over-dependence on imported materials. In item 16, the mean of the respondents is 2.62 which are above the expected mean of 2.5. This indicates that the students who agreed that mono-economy

operating system is the major cause of economy backwardness are more than the students who said that mono-economy operating system is not the major cause of economy backwardness.

### 3.5. Research question five

What rescue measures can be adopted to mitigate the effects of economic recession on education?

**Table 5** the mean and standard deviation showing the rescue measures that can be adopted to mitigate the effects of economic recession on education

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	REMARK
17	Giving students home projects that require skills can help in enhancing entrepreneurship and thereby lead to economy growth.	3.14	1.09	AGREED
18	Invitation of resource persons outside the school setting to impart basic skills to the students can lead to poverty alleviation.	2.71	0.94	AGREED
19	Practical approach to vocational courses or subjects like agriculture, fine and applied art, computer, etc can help the school to generate revenue to solve emergent needs.	3.30	0.95	AGREED
20	Sending of students to industries to acquire vocational experience can enable them to be self-reliant.	3.37	0.92	AGREED

From table 5, in item 17, the mean of the respondents is 3.14 which are higher than the expected mean 2.5. This shows that those who agreed that giving students home projects that require skills can help in enhancing entrepreneurship and thereby lead to economy growth are more than the respondents who disagreed. In item 18, the mean of the respondents is 2.71 which are above the expected mean of 2.5. This implies that the respondents who agreed that invitation of resource persons outside the school setting to impart basic skills to the students can lead to poverty alleviation are more than those who did not agreed with it. In item 19, the mean of the respondents is 3.30 which are above the expected mean of 2.5. This implies that the teachers who agreed that practical approach to vocational courses or subjects like Agriculture, Fine and applied art, Computer, etc can help the school to generate revenue to solve emergent needs are more than the teachers who responded that practical approach to vocational courses or subjects like Agriculture, Fine and applied art, Computer, etc cannot help the school to generate revenue to solve emergent needs. In item 20, the mean of the respondents is 3.37 which are more than the expected mean of 2.5. This implies that the respondents who agreed that sending of students to industries to acquire vocational experience can enable them to be self-reliant are more than the respondents who disagreed.

### 3.6. Analysis of hypothesis

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the level of impact of economic recession on educational system among public and private schools in Nigeria.

The only variable is the level of impact of economic recession on educational system among public and private schools in Nigeria. T-test is used to analyze the data obtained. A summary of the result is presented in Table 6.

**Table 6** T-test analysis of the level of impact of economic recession on educational system among public and private schools in Nigeria

Variables	N	Mean(x)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Calculated t-value ( $t_{cal}$ )	df	Critical t-value ( $t_{tab}$ ) at 0.05	Remark
Public	50	2.99	1.05	3.12	98	1.96	Significant
Private	50	3.25	1.20				



The results presented in this table 6 reveals that the calculated t-value,  $t_{cal}$  of 3.12 is found to be higher than the critical t-value,  $t_{tab}$  of 1.96 (i.e  $t_{tab} < t_{cal}$ ) at 0.05 level of significance and 98 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that the level of impact of economic recession on educational system among public and private schools is significantly high within the study area. In other words, the level of impact of economic recession on educational system among private schools with mean of 3.25 is higher than that of the public schools with mean of 2.99 in the study area. This implies that economic recession has a great influence on the private schools than the public schools.

#### 4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study shows that a lot of harm like inability to fund most crucial educational activities in the school, inability to thoroughly execute the curriculum, inability to provide basic resources for the progress of education and poor educational standard and structure has been caused as a result of economic recession. This implies that the educational system of Nigeria is badly being affected by the economic recession. The outcome of the study is in consonance with the observation of Henstra (2008), Ibrahim and Mandara (2009) who noted that the distractive effects of the economic crisis are not easy to quantify, but the reality is that the world stock market has fallen, large financial and educational institutions has collapsed, drastic fall in the standard of living, acute accumulation of debt by nation; massive retrenchment of workers and increase in crime rates.

The analysis of  $H_0$  also shows that there is significant difference in the level of impact of economic recession on the educational system among public and private schools. By implication, it means that the level of impact of economic recession is high among private schools. In view of this, Kumuyi (2010) advised that these realities call for every ones hands to be on the spindle so as to overcome the crisis before us. He maintained more that attention should be directed to science and technological education which are the base of any nation's development and sustainability. Samuelson (1968) in describing economic diversification as an act of investing in a variety of assets, he also mentioned its benefit as that which reduces risk especially in the time of recession, inflation, deflation etc.

#### 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Economic recession refers to a period of downturn in a nation economic activity. Based on the analysis of the teachers' responses, it was observed that the level of economic recession has so much affect the standard of educational system in Nigeria ranging from inadequate curriculum implementation, lack of resources in terms of competent manpower, facilities, and fund. It was discovered that the major causes of the economic recession are; inability to diversify the nation economy into other resourceful and profitable sector, lack of national savings, over-dependence on imported materials, and adoption of mono-economy operating system. Nevertheless, it was observed that the best way out is to strengthen and encourage entrepreneurship through the practicing of all vocational subjects rather than focusing on the theoretical aspect. Also, the results of this research obtained generally shows that the level of influence of economic recession is high in most secondary schools. Meanwhile, it is higher among private schools than public schools. This shows that urgent attention is seriously needed to seek to how the educational system in Nigeria can be revived. In response to this,

- It is therefore suggested that the government should proffer result-oriented means through which the educational system can be energized in the present economic condition and on how economic recession can become a forgotten occurrence.
- School owners and teachers should be enlightened on adoptable measures like translating vocational subject which can enhance fund generation. Thereby enabling them to meet the basic need in their schools.
- Stakeholders should also take note that the state of the nation educational system is a concern of all. Therefore, assistance as an individual or corporate body should be rendered for the progress of education in the country.
- Government should also stop from operating a mono-economy system by diversifying the nation economy into other profitable areas like embracing vocational development, practical science and technology, etc. Foreign materials (importation) should be discouraged while national savings should be encouraged.

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This study has not received any external funding.

#### Conflicts of interests

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interests.

**Data and materials availability**

All data associated with this study are present in the paper.

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